



CONCISE
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
PRESENT CONSTITUTION
OF THE
PROTESTANT CHURCH
OF THE
UNITED BRETHREN
ADHERING TO THE
CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTH IMPROVED GERMAN
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Account of the present *Constitution of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren*, contains

1. *A List of all the Countries and Places where the Congregations and Missions of the Brethren are settled at present.*

2. *A Description of the internal and external Constitution of the Brethren's Unity.*

Whoever would wish for a more particular account of these *Settlements*, may find it in *David Cranz's Ancient and Modern History of the Brethren*, (printed at *Barby*, in 1771, and the two *Continuations* of it, *Barby*, 1791, and 1804:)* and, with reference to their *Constitution*, he may consult a Publication in German, edited at *Barby*, in 1789, entitled *Ratio Disciplinæ Unitatis Fratrum, A. C.* or, *The Ground of the Constitution of the Brethren's Unity of the Confession of Augsburg.*

The Doctrine of the United Brethren is laid before the Public in *August Gottlieb Spangenberg's Idea Fidei Fratrum*, or, *Exposition of Christian Doctrine, as taught in the Protestant Church of the United Brethren.* (*Barby*, 1779.)†

* The two continuations of the *History of the Brethren* are not yet translated into English.

† A second edition of this book, in English, was printed in 1796, by Hazard, Bath.

The First Section.

A List of all the Countries and Places where the Congregations and Missions of the Brethren are settled at present.

THE Establishments of the United Brethren are of various kinds. Some were begun by the Brethren in such places as were not inhabited before, with a view that members of their Congregation only might live in them, unmixed with others. For instance, Herrnhut, Fulnec, Gracehill, &c. The Brethren have, farther, built houses near to some cities, towns, or villages, in such a manner, that the chapel, and the dwelling-houses of the members of the Congregation stand, as much as possible, together, in one place or street, and more or less distant from the other buildings. For instance, at Neusalz, Neuwied, Bedford, &c.

AGAIN, in other Congregations of the Brethren, their members do not dwell together in one place, but live dispersed in cities, towns, and villages, meeting in one chapel, and have regulations suited to their circumstances. For instance, London, Bristol, Tytherton, &c.

IN the Mission-settlements of the Brethren also the same distinctions may be observed. In some, the converts live together, as at *Gnadenthal*, (*Gracevale*,) near the Cape of Good Hope, in South Africa. In other Missions they live dispersed, as, the Negroes in the West-Indies, where they assemble, for the preaching of the Gospel, and the celebration of the Sacraments, in a church erected near the habitations of the Missionaries.

IN *Christian countries* are the following *Congregations of the Brethren*,

I. IN EUROPE,

I. IN *Germany*:

Herrnhut, in Upper Lusatia, on the high road between Loebau and Zittau, built upon land formerly belonging to the village of Berthelsdorf, an estate of the late Count Zinzendorf. This first establishment of the renewed church of the United Brethren was begun in 1722; and the Congregation was, in process of time, confirmed in its rights and regulations by grants of the Sovereign.

Niesky, in Upper Lusatia, on the estate of Trebus, ten miles from Gorlitz. This settlement was begun by emigrants from Bohemia, in 1742. Here, since 1808, the Academy, and already, since 1789, the College, or Seminary, of the Unity of the Brethren formerly at Barby, are established, in which students are prepared to be employed in the Congregations among Christians and Heathen.

Kleinwelke, (or Little Welcke) in Upper Lusatia, about three miles from Budissin, was begun in 1756; contiguous to a small village of the same name. Some members of this Congregation of the Brethren are of the *Vandal nation*.

Gnadau, in the county of Barby in Saxony, five miles from the town of Barby, and fifteen from Magdeburg. The castle or palace of Barby, with the land belonging to it, and the *farm* of Doeben, having been ceded, on a perpetual lease, to Henry XXV. Count Reuss, with a view to the formation of a settlement of the Brethren; the building was undertaken, in 1767, near Doeben. The establishment, which the Brethren had at Barby ever since 1748, was relinquished in 1809, and the palace and land given up to another tenant, with the approbation of the Sovereign, the Academy having already been removed to Niesky the year before.

Gnadenberg, in Lower Silesia, principality of Jauer, three miles from Bunzlau, was built in 1743, a special grant having been obtained for it from the King of Prussia.

Gnadenfrey, likewise in Lower Silesia, principality of Schweidnitz, about six miles from Reichenbach, commenced in the same year.

AT *Neusalz*, in the same province, a settlement of the Brethren adjoining to the town of that name, on the river Oder, was begun in 1744, and continued in a flourishing state, till 1759, when, in the war, which commenced in 1756, it was plundered, and laid in ashes. In 1763, at the desire of government, it was rebuilt, and, again occupied by a Congregation of the Brethren.

Gnadenfeld, in the principality of Oppeln, in Upper Silesia, ten miles from Kosel, was built in 1780, by a special royal grant.

AT *Berlin*, a Congregation of Bohemian Brethren was formed in 1744. There is a chapel, in which Divine Service is performed according to the rites of the Brethren's church.

AT *Rueksdorf*, three miles from Berlin, a Congregation of Bohemian Brethren assembled as early as 1737, who erected a chapel and a house for the minister.

AT *New Dietendorf*, about twelve miles from Gotha, and five from Erfurt, a considerable number of persons met as a Congregation of the Brethren in 1742.

AFTER many difficulties, the settlement began to increase in 1753, and obtained in 1764, a grant from the Duke of Saxe Gotha.

Ebersdorf, in the territory of the Counts of Reuss, called, Voigtland; near Lobenstein. In this place, towards the close of the seventeenth century, a small company of pious persons of the Lutheran church had assembled, which from time to time was augmented. In 1745

they joined the Unity of the Brethren, and received regulations as a Congregation belonging to this church. This led to the establishment of a settlement. For which purpose the reigning Count allotted a piece of land, granting in 1761, the requisite privileges.

AT *New Wied*, upon the Rhine, a Congregation of the Brethren was formed by a number of Calvinist Brethren and Sisters of the French nation, who had emigrated from the former settlement of the Brethren at *Herrnhaag* in *Wetteravia*. The reigning Count gave them, in 1751, a grant for building, which he renewed more extensively in 1756. The Brethren undertook to build, upon a lot of ground adjoining the town, a chapel, and dwellings for the minister, the choirs,* and families. Since which time, the Congregation has so increased as to occupy not only the lot before-mentioned, enclosed by buildings, but also another which was begun in 1781. This Congregation has been increased chiefly by Germans, and, at present, but few French Calvinist members remain. Divine Service is, therefore, now performed only in the German language.

Koenigsfeld, in the Black Forest, grand-dutchy of *Baden*, ten miles from *Hornberg*, and about eight from *Rothweil*, was begun in 1807, a grant having been obtained from the Sovereign. In 1810 the building of a chapel and house for the minister was, with other buildings begun, and finished in 1812.

2. IN the kingdom of *Denmark* there is a Congregation of the Brethren, called *Christiansfeld*. It is situate in the Dutchy of *Sleswick*; and was begun in 1772, upon *Tyrstruphof*, a royal manor, in the bailiwick of *Hadersleben*. Permission to build this place was given by Government in an instrument dated Dec. 10. 1771, which at the same time grants, or confirms to the Protestant church of the Brethren, various rights and immu-

* See the Second Section § 19.

nities, both ecclesiastical and civil, for the purpose of carrying on Missions in other parts of the world, wherever the Danes have possessions, or colonies. This place, in succeeding years, rapidly increased, and is now one of the most considerable settlements of the Brethren. Divine Worship is performed both in the German and Danish languages.

3. IN *Holland*, at *Zeyst*, near *Utrecht*, a commencement was made in 1748, of erecting a settlement of the Brethren upon two plots of ground, situate between the mansion-house, and the village of the same name. In 1768 a new chapel, and a dwelling for the minister, were built. Divine Service is, at present, performed only in the German language.

THE former Congregations of the Brethren at *Amsterdam* and *Haerlem* having considerably decreased of late, the constitution and regulations of the Brethren could be no longer maintained. The few remaining families of Brethren join the Congregation at *Zeyst*, as much as their circumstances permit.

AT *Norden*, in the former principality of *East Friesland*, a small Congregation of the Brethren is established, which has a place of public worship. It arose as early as the reign of the last prince of *East Friesland*.

4. IN *Great-Britain*, many Congregations of the United Brethren are established, both in towns and villages, according to the account given in the beginning of this section; but some of them are very small.

IN *London*, a Congregation of the Brethren has existed ever since 1742, which has one chapel in *Nevil's Court*, *Fetter-lane*, and another at *Chelsea*, attached to their burying ground.

Fulneck, six miles from *Leeds*, in *Yorkshire*, a regular settlement of the Brethren. The building of it was begun in 1744. In succeeding years it was enlarged, by degrees, with a chapel and other dwellings. Congre-

gations of the Brethren were established, since 1755, at *Pudsey*, *Wyke*, *Mirfield*, and *Gommersal*, subject to the inspection of the Elders' conference, at *Fulneck*.* The three latter have each their own chapels and ministers, and, as well as *Fulneck*, institutions for the education of children.

Fairfield, in Lancashire, four miles from Manchester, built in 1784, by members of a Congregation of the Brethren, settled since 1755, on land taken on lease, belonging to the village of *Dulinfild*, in Cheshire. The lease being nearly expired, they were obliged to look out for another establishment. However, in the sequel, a small Congregation was gathered again in the fore-mentioned village, which has its own chapel and minister, and stands under the inspection of the Elders' conference of *Fairfield*.

THE rest of the Congregations of the Brethren in England and Wales are settled in *Bedford*, since 1745, *Bristol*, including *Kingswood*, 1755, *Leominster*, 1759, *Haverfordwest*, in Pembrokeshire, South Wales, 1763, *Bath*, 1765, *Plymouth-Dock*, 1805; and in the country, at *Tytherton*, including *Malmesbury*, in Wiltshire, since 1748, *Ockbrook*, in Derbyshire, 1750, and *Woodford*, including *Eydon* and *Culworth*, in Northamptonshire, 1796.† Besides these, the Brethren have some chapels, in various parts of the united kingdom, in which the gospel is preached by their ministers.

IN *Scotland*, a Congregation of the Brethren was regulated at *Ayr* in 1778, after the Brethren had, for several years, preached there and in other places.

IN *Ireland*, Congregations of the Brethren have been established.

* The first of these (*Pudsey*) being in the immediate vicinity of *Fulneck*, is now united with that Congregation.

† And now *Priors Marston*, in Warwickshire.

AT *Dublin*, since 1750. Their church is in Bishop-street.

UPON the townland of *Ballykennedy*, county of Antrim, a regular settlement called *Gracehill*, was formed in 1763.

AT *Ballymaquigan*, county of Derry, on the west-side of Lough Neagh, is likewise a settlement of the Brethren, built since 1767, and called *Gracefield*. Besides these, there are two smaller Congregations of the Brethren, one at *Ballinderry*, county of Armagh, since 1755, and another at *Cootehill*, county of Cavan, 1765.

II. In ASIA,

in the *Russian empire*, a Congregation of the Brethren is established at *Sarepta*, in the government of Astracan, begun in 1765. The Unity of the Brethren had, in the preceding year, by an imperial ukase, (edict) obtained permission to settle in the empire, with a grant of complete liberty of conscience and religious worship according to their constitution. They chose a piece of land, for their establishment, twenty miles below Czaritzin, on the confluence of the river Sarpa, with the Wolga, where they erected a church and other buildings.

ALSO at *St. Petersburg* and *Moscow*, the Brethren perform public Divine Service in houses licensed by the Russian government.

III. In NORTH AMERICA,

in the *United States*, the following Congregations of the Brethren are established.

Bethlehem, the principal settlement of the United Brethren in North America, in Northampton county, state of Pennsylvania, fifty miles from Philadelphia, on an arm of the river Delaware, which still retains the Indian name of Lechai, or Lechi. This settlement was begun in 1741, at a time when yet few Europeans lived in that country.

Nazareth, together with *Christiansbrunn* and *Gnaden-thal*, situated nine miles north of Bethlehem, where is a considerable school.

Lititz, in the county of Lancaster, seventy miles from Philadelphia, was built in 1757.

CONGREGATIONS of the Brethren are also established, in the more northern states, some in towns, others in the country, (several of which are, however, very small) as in the following places :

New York, and *Philadelphia*, since 1741, *Emmaus*, near Bethlehem, about 1760, *Schoeneck*, near Nazareth, 1762, *Newport*, in Rhode Island, 1758, *Staaten Island*, 1764, *Gnadenhuetten* on the Mahony, *Gnadenhuetten* and *Beersheba*, on the Muskingum, *Bethel* on the Swatara, *Lancaster* in Pennsylvania, (about 1750,) *Yorktown*, *Hebron*, and *Graceham*, the last in the state of Maryland.

IN the state of *North Carolina*, in a district called *Wachovia*, are the following settlements of the Brethren:

Salem, the chief establishment, in the centre of the country, begun in 1766 ;

Bethabara, the first place settled by the Brethren in Wachovia, in 1753, situate six miles north of Salem.

Bethany, nine miles north of Salem, begun in 1760.

THE Congregations at *Friedberg*, *Friedland*, and *Hope*, (the last of which consists of members of the English nation only,) took their rise between the years 1769 and 1775.

Now follows a list of those countries and places, in which the gospel is preached by the Brethren to the *Heathen* of various nations, and where Christian Congregations, collected from them, have been established. An explicit account of the origin, design, and regulations of the missionary labors of the Brethren, may be found

in a publication printed at Barby in 1782, and in an English translation, in London, in 1788, entitled, *An Account of the Manner in which the United Brethren preach the Gospel, and carry on their Missions, among the Heathen.*

In GREENLAND.

New Herrnhut, on Ball's river, in the sixty-fourth degree of north latitude, where the Brethren, on their arrival in 1733, formed their first settlement.

Lichtenfels, on the Fishers'-bay, ninety miles south of New Herrnhut, begun in 1758.

AN extensive description of these two Congregations is to be found in *Cranz's History of the Mission of the United Brethren in Greenland, of 1765*, and in the *Continuation* of that work, published in 1770.*

Lichtenau, in a more southerly situation, not far distant from Staatenhook, settled in 1774. This Congregation still receives, from time to time, some increase from the Heathen, which is, at present, but rarely the case in the two former Congregations, as Greenland, by the labors of both the Danish and the Brethren's missionaries, may now be considered as a Christian country.

UPON the *Coast of Terra Labrador*, the preaching of the gospel, by the Brethren, among the *Esquimaux*, commenced in 1771; and, at present, three small Congregations are collected from this nation. The growth of these Congregations, both in number, and in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, has, in later times, become very conspicuous. The first place, in which the missionaries of the Brethren settled in the fore-mentioned year, is named *Nain*, situate in the fifty-seventh degree N. L. The second, begun in 1776, is situated on an island in a small bay, in the fifty-eighth degree, called by the Esquimaux, *Okkak*, that is, *Tongue*,

* The Continuation is not yet translated into English.

which name the settlement has retained. The third place, in the fifty-sixth degree N. L., commenced in 1782, and is named, *Hopedale*.

AMONG the *Indians* in *North America*, the Brethren began to publish the gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, soon after their arrival in this country, in 1735, with such success, that, ever since 1742, a Congregation of Christian Indians, chiefly of the *Mahikander* tribe, was gathered in the Indian village *Shekomeko*, on the confines of the state of Connecticut. The memorable events of this Indian Congregation, which, in the sequel, was increased by members of different Indian nations, their wanderings, sufferings, wonderful preservation, and growth, through the power of the testimony of Jesus, may be best learned, as far as the year 1787, from *G. H. Loskiel's History of the Mission of the United-Brethren among the Indians in North America*, printed in German, in 1789, and 1794, in English. Since that time, this Congregation has experienced various similar vicissitudes, too circumstantial to be related in this account. At present, a small Congregation of believing Indians is established at *Fairfield* in *Upper Canada*,* and another at *Gosken*, on the river *Muskingum*, upon land granted by the Congress of the United States, in favour of the Indian Mission in the state of Ohio.

IN the year 1801, a Mission was undertaken among the *Cherokees*, in the state of *Tennessee*, on a spot called *Springplace*; and, in 1807, another was begun among the *Creek Indians*, on *Flint-river*, in the state of *Georgia*, where, however, the endeavors of the Brethren have hitherto not been attended with much success.†

IN the *West Indies* the gospel is preached by the Brethren to the *Negro-slaves* in several islands, and in some very numerous Congregations of Heathen converts have been collected.

* Since pillaged and burnt by the American army, in 1814.

† This latter mission has since been relinquished.

IN *Jamaica*, the Mission was begun in 1754: but its progress has been very variable, and the number of converted Negroes is not considerable at present. The Brethren have two Mission-settlements in the island, at *Carmel* and the *Bogue*, in the parish of *St. Elizabeth*, and another at *Mesopotamia*, parish of *Westmoreland*.*

A History of the Mission in the three Danish W. I. islands, St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. Jan, compiled by C. G. A. Oldendorp, was published by *J. J. Bossart*, at *Barby*, in the year 1777. The Mission in the first of these islands is the oldest of all those, undertaken by the United Brethren, the first missionaries having set out from *Herrnhut* for *St. Thomas* in the year 1732. There are, at present, two settlements in this island, *New Herrnhut* and *Niesky*, each of which has a church and dwellings for the missionaries. In *St. Croix* are three settlements: *Friederisthal*, near *Christianstadt*, the capital of the island, since 1753; *Friedensberg*, near *Friedrichstadt*, at the west-end of the island, since 1771; and *Friedensfeld*, in the central part of it, begun in 1804. In *St. Jan* there is a settlement, called *Bethany*, where a church and a mission-house were erected in 1753, and another called *Emmaus*, begun in 1773.

THE Mission in *Antigua*, at present one of the most flourishing, commenced in 1756, and the first settlement was near the town of *St. John*. Another, on the opposite end of the island, is called *Gracehill*, and a third, *Gracebay*. The number of believing Negroes, ministered unto by the Brethren as a Christian Congregation, amounts in this island, as in *St Croix*, to several thousands.

* THE Mission in *St Christopher's*, (or *St. Kitt's*) commenced in 1777, and has been successful. A numerous

* Of late however, the prospect, as to the success of the mission in this island, has considerably brightened.

Congregation of Negroes being served by missionaries residing in the settlement of the Brethren at *Basseterre*.

IN the island of *Barbadoes* a Mission was established, in 1767, at *Sharon*, six miles from Bridgetown.

IN *South America*, in the possessions of the Dutch in *Terrafirma*, or *Guiana*, a Mission was begun by the Brethren in 1738, accounts of which, down to the year 1780, are to be found in the *Narratives selected from the History of the Church of the Brethren*, printed at Barby in the years 1803—1805, Part II. Section III.* A mission-settlement is formed in the capital of *Surinam*, *Paramaribo*, and another on the plantation *Sommelsdyk*, upon the river *Cottica*, for promoting the conversion of the Negro-slaves imported from Africa. From the latter place, the gospel is also preached in other neighbouring plantations.

AMONG the *Free Negroes*, near the river *Surinam*, missionaries of the Brethren's church have resided with the same view, ever since 1765, whose endeavors, however, have hitherto not produced much fruit.†

THE Mission among the *Arawaks*, which was the first undertaking of the Brethren in these parts, has undergone many remarkable vicissitudes, as may be seen in *Cranz's History of the Brethren*, and in the before-mentioned *Narratives*. There is, at present, an inconsiderable number of baptized Indians of this nation living on the river *Corentyne*, among whom a few Brethren reside.

IN AFRICA, among the *Hottentots*, near the Cape of Good Hope, a Mission already begun as early as 1736, but afterwards relinquished, was renewed in 1792, with abundant success, in a short time. Two Congrega-

* Not yet translated into English.

† The missionaries have lately been withdrawn from this place, which, on account of circumstances, could no longer be maintained.

tions of believing Hottentots have been gathered by the preaching of the gospel, and settled, one at *Gnadenhal*, (*Gracevale*,) in *Bavianskloof* (*Baboonsglen*,) about an hundred and thirty miles north-east of the Capetown, and another in *Greenkloof*, north of the Capetown, not far from the western coast. Among the baptized there are individuals belonging to the nations of the *Cuffres*, *Tambukkis*, and *Dambarras*.

OF some other attempts of the Brethren to spread the gospel among the Heathen, which have either proved abortive, or produced no abiding fruit, *Dav. Cranz's History of the Brethren*, and the two *Continuations* of it, give a sufficient account.*

THE whole missionary work, as carried on by the church of the United Brethren, is placed under the special inspection of a committee of the Elders' conference of the Unity, called, *The Department for Missions*. Moreover, *Societies for the Furtherance, and Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen*, have been formed in England, Holland, and North America; which chiefly confine their attention to the support of some particular Missions. The very considerable expenditure, occasioned by this great undertaking, for journies and voyages, the maintenance of missionaries, and of their widows and children, &c. has been hitherto defrayed, under the evident blessing of God, by voluntary regular contributions of the members of the Brethren's Congregations, by legacies and donations from them and other well-wishers to the Brethren Missions: the missionaries themselves endeavor, wherever it is in their power, to provide for their own sustenance, either altogether, or in part, by the labor of their hands, alleviating thereby the burden of the above-mentioned committee, which, in the present times especially, is not light.

* Likewise the Introduction to the Periodical Accounts, relating to the Missions of the church of the United Brethren established among the Heathen.

The Second Section.

A Description of the internal and external Constitution of the Brethren's Unity.

§ 1.

ALL the before-mentioned Congregations collectively, call themselves, *The Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum, or United Brethren, of the Confession of Augsburg.*

THEIR members consist partly of descendants from the ancient Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, and partly of persons, who, being born of parents who were members either of the Lutheran or the Calvinist church, were educated in one or other of those establishments, and who have joined the Brethren, without changing their religion. Those who have joined them from other religious denominations, are reckoned among the first-mentioned class.

§ 2.

To this union, the gracious providence of God itself furnished the occasion. For, when many Moravian Brethren, for conscience sake, left their native country, and settled at Herrnhut, others also, both of the Lutheran and Calvinist church, who were concerned for their salvation, joined them. Having, by the grace of God, come to an agreement respecting the incontrovertible fundamental truths, contained in the Holy Scriptures, on which the happiness of man depends; they also became cordially united with one another in love, and agreed upon this point, "That they would bear and forbear with each other in non-essentials; and avoid all disputes arising from controverted subjects, for the sake of Jesus, and His love to man."

Upon this head they expressed themselves in a public instrument, dated Herrnhut, August 12th, 1729, to this effect: "That they do not wish to be separated from any one in other Christian Congregations, who is really called by the Holy Ghost, through the gospel, enlightened with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved in the true faith: although he may entertain different opinions upon non-essential points, and, perhaps, conceive of the meaning of some particular passages of Scripture differently from them." But then it was taken for granted, as a fundamental principle, that there must be a necessary agreement among them, respecting all those truths, on which, according to the clear declarations of the Bible, our salvation depends.

§ 3.

IN process of time, that part of the Brethren's Unity, which descended from the ancient church of the Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia, received and maintained their ancient ecclesiastical government, including the consecration of their own bishops, and the ordination of their ministers.

THE Brethren's Unity therefore make a profitable use both of the ordination, and the constitution and discipline, of the ancient church of the Brethren, for the furtherance and extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The theological faculty of the university at Tubingen signified, in an extensive response of April 16th, 1733, its approbation, "That the renewed church of the Brethren, at the same time that they perfectly concur with the doctrines of the Protestant church, retain the constitution and discipline of the ancient church of the Brethren."

§ 4.

BUT, in order that the Brethren's Unity may not become a separate religion or sect, it was resolved, That no person, born and bred in the Lutheran or Calvinist

church, should be considered as embracing a new religion, by becoming a member of the Brethren's Unity; but that he still remains a Lutheran, or a Calvinist. On this account, it is the constant practice among them, that such members of the Brethren's Unity, as belong to the one, or the other of those religious denominations, whenever they reside, for a time, at a distance from a Congregation of the Brethren, not only attend the preaching of the gospel in that church, to which they belong, but also receive the sacraments at the hands of its ministers, without the smallest hesitation; in the same manner as it had already been established, as a rule, by the divines of the Brethren, both of the Augustan and the Helvetian Confessions, in the *Consensus of Sendomir*, in the year 1570.

§ 5.

By occasion of the many journies and voyages which the Brethren have undertaken, in various countries, for the spread of the gospel among the Heathen, as well as on other occasions, they have become acquainted with many pious and sincere ministers of the gospel, and with other persons of all ranks, who were cordially interested in the propagation of the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus. This proved the occasion of their being invited to visit different countries, with a view of conversing with awakened persons for their improvement; to which they agreed, and often staid for a longer or shorter time, in such places. The sincere aim of the Brethren, and their consequent exertions, are merely to promote, in those who are truly concerned for their eternal salvation, and seek their acquaintance, a lively faith in Christ Jesus, and fervent love to Him; and to excite them, both by word and example, to follow Him in truth. This they endeavor to do by means of private conversations and meetings for edification, as far as the latter are allowed by the laws of different countries. They also do their utmost to preserve them from needless separation from

their own church, and to lead them duly to appreciate the enjoyment of the Word of God, and the sacraments, in the churches of their places of abode, in order that they may approve themselves true and faithful adherents to their religion, and shine as lights in their respective vicinities.

THERE are, at present, in almost all the Protestant countries of Europe, larger or smaller *Societies* in a variety of places, who stand in connection with the church of the Brethren, and make it their concern to promote the increase of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, in fellowship with them. In this view, either a settled residence of Brethren from the Congregations, or visits, repeated from time to time are requested. The meetings of these Societies for fellowship and edification, at which all disorder, fanaticism, and transgression of the ordinances of government in ecclesiastical matters, are justly and most carefully avoided, are held in a great number of places in houses, licensed by the Sovereigns of the respective countries, for instance, at Koenigsberg in Prussia, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Altona, Basle, &c.

§ 6.

THE administration of the Word, and Sacraments, in the Congregations of the Brethren, is performed, either by ministers that have received ordination from Bishops of the church of the Brethren, or, by such as were ordained in the Lutheran or Calvinist church. It is here to be observed, that, if a brother of the ancient episcopal church of the Brethren lives in a Congregation which is served by a minister ordained in the Lutheran or Calvinist church, he feels no scruple to have his children baptized by him, or to receive the holy communion at his hands. In like manner, a brother of the Lutheran or Calvinist church, living in a Congregation, the minister of which has received his ordination from a Bishop, avails himself of his ministry without scruple.

THE Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are and shall remain, the only rule and principle of doctrine and practice in the Protestant church of the Unity of the Brethren. They believe that the Congregation of Jesus Christ in the first, and that in the nineteenth century, are both built upon the same foundation of the apostles and prophets, and that the one as well as the other can have no other rule. The Brethren's Unity, therefore, acknowledges and receives the doctrine of the unaltered confession of Augsburg, especially the first twenty-one doctrinal articles as presented to the Emperor Charles V. in the German language, in 1530: wherever they are, as they have frequently and positively declared, "because it is concordant with the Holy Scriptures," as *Cranz* observes in the *History of the Brethren*, p. 342, &c. Neither will the Brethren agree to be considered, and received in any country, otherwise than in the character of *Adherents to the Augsburg Confession*. Thus they have acknowledged no other Confession of Faith, in England, Holland, and Russia, than the Augsburg Confession. See *Cranz*, p. 526.

MOREOVER, they have, in their Synods, unanimously agreed, That no doctrine repugnant to the Confession of Augsburg shall be permitted to be taught in the Congregations of the Brethren, and whoever shall persist in preaching other doctrines, cannot receive or hold a ministerial office in the Protestant church of the United Brethren.

No other books, of whatever description, are accepted by the Brethren as *symbolical*. They, indeed, leave whatever other books are received as symbolical by a large part of the Protestants, to their own merit, believing that they are meant to confirm, and to explain yet more fully, the truths of the gospel contained in the Con-

fession of Augsburg: but they still decline admitting them as symbolical in their own church.

THIS extends even to the writings of the late Count *Zinzendorf*. They would deem themselves highly ungrateful if they did not acknowledge the favors which God has bestowed upon the church of the Brethren through the ministry of that excellent man and servant of Christ. On this account, his writings also, which contain many a valuable testimony of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, are counted by them worthy of regard and esteem, although they may not assent to, or adopt all the peculiar sentiments and expressions contained therein.

§ 9.

As a declaration of Christian doctrine, the Brethren esteem very highly the *Synod of Berne*, held in the year 1532, and particularly the first eighteen chapters, as a pastoral instruction; because it illustrates incomparably these words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. 2. 2. *I determined, not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*

DOGMATICAL divinity is diligently propounded in the lectures given to the young students, who are preparing for the ministry. But they are cautioned against dwelling on such points as the Holy Scriptures have not positively determined, and which, therefore, are merely problematical. For this leads, too commonly, to endless disputations, from which little profit is to be expected.

CATECHETICAL instruction is uniformly given in all the Congregations of the Brethren; but they particularly insist on the doctrines of the gospel being not merely comprehended with the understanding, but also received in the heart, and brought into experience and practice. In morality, the Brethren lay the stress not upon what is to be done or left undone only, but chiefly on the principles from which it is deducible: And as these are contained in the doctrine of faith, the Brethren always pre-

fer combining doctrinal and practical divinity. They believe that our Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples made this their constant practice. They apprehend that the doctrine of morality will remain unfruitful, unless a living faith in Jesus Christ produces both willingness and ability to practice its injunctions.

§ 10.

THE Brethren cordially receive what St Paul teaches in Rom. xii. 1. &c. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* They, therefore, in all cases which belong to the rights of the Sovereigns in ecclesiastical matters, do not claim any privileges in things, either inconsistent with the general constitution of the country in which they live, or not expressly granted to them by the Sovereign. But, after a previous careful investigation of their constitution, the Sovereigns, in whose dominions they have been established, have graciously granted them those privileges and immunities, which their constitution essentially requires. And these free grants of the higher powers firmly establish those ecclesiastical rights, by which the Congregations of the Brethren are to be regulated and governed. By virtue of these, the regulation of their church-orders and discipline, liturgy, and ceremonies, is entirely left to their own discretion. They appoint and maintain their own ministers and elders, and have their own churches, chapels, and burial-grounds. They are not subject to the inspection and jurisdiction of the spiritual courts; but their whole constitution stands immediately under the Sovereigns of the respective countries.*

§ 11.

THE Brethren believe, indeed, that the church-government in the Protestant religions, together with all

* Hereby is not meant, that jurisdiction of the spiritual courts, which relates to civil matters, such as wills, or the form of marriage, &c. but only such as relates to their church-government, discipline, &c.

their prerogatives, is appropriate to the present state of those religious constitutions: but yet they are persuaded, that it does not apply to the Congregations of the Brethren, for this reason, because they never were intended to form a national establishment. For their design is no other than this, to be true and living Congregations of Jesus, and to build each other up as a spiritual house of God, to the end, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ may be furthered by them. Hence, the doctrine of Jesus and His apostles, and the orders and practice of the apostolic churches, are the model by which they wish to be formed. And as the apostolic congregational constitution is grounded upon those divine benefits which Christ Himself has purchased for His church and bestows upon it; therefore the Unity of the Brethren deems such a constitution essentially requisite, and seeks both to approach nearer and nearer unto it, and to preserve it unaltered. Experience teaches, that such a congregational constitution, as is here described, may very well exist among the general religions and church-constitutions, and would redound both to the honor of Jesus Christ, and to public utility.

ALL those principles, therefore, which, according to divine appointment, mark the character and constitution of the universal church of Christ, belong also to the peculiar character, and to the very existence of the constitution of the Congregations of the Brethren. All the internal and external regulations of the latter are solely intended for the attainment of this aim, and for the maintenance of this character. And, in this respect, a thorough uniformity exists in all the Congregations of the Brethren, notwithstanding a great variety in the outward regulations, which have a reference to the diversity both of the religious constitutions of the countries, in which they are established, and of the grants they have obtained from their respective Sovereigns.

§ 12.

THE privileges of an episcopal church, which the present Unity of the Brethren derives from the ancient church of the Brethren, are regarded by them as a signal benefit vouchsafed by the providence of God; as they are the means, whereby the Unity of the Brethren and its constitution have been maintained and supported, among the Protestant churches.

THE Brethren improve these external church-privileges, and the liberty derived from them, in having the ministers of their church ordained by their own Bishops, (as has been observed in §. 3,) as a *means* of promoting the kingdom of Jesus, and maintaining good outward order. But the direction of the Unity of the Brethren in general, or that of individual Congregations, is not committed to the *Bishops* as such; but they, as well as the *Presbyters* and *Deacons* ordained by them, and the ministers who have received Lutheran or Calvinist ordination, together with all other servants of the Congregations of the Brethren, are subordinate to a *Board*, or *Conference of Elders*, appointed by the general *Synod*, to whom the direction of the whole Unity of the Brethren is intrusted, and without commission from whom, Bishops are not empowered to ordain. But all ordinations by the Lutheran or Calvinist Protestant churches, established by law in different countries, are admitted as equally valid with those of the church of the Brethren.

§ 13.

IN all cases where the Protestant churches, agreeably to the constitution of the country have laws, which have an influence upon the general polity, and the welfare of the public, and which are not prejudicial to the internal constitution of the Congregations of the Brethren, as in publishing the bans of marriage; the prohibition of marrying persons within certain degrees of consanguinity; likewise, in the celebration of marriages according to the

manner prescribed by law, and so forth; the United Brethren carefully regulate their conduct in every respect, conformably to the laws of the countries in which they live.

§ 14.

FOR the due observance of the laws of the country, and of outward order and discipline, as it becomes a Congregation of Jesus; likewise, for pleading their cause in cases of necessity; to prevent grievances, and the loss of privileges granted to the Congregations of the Brethren by the respective Sovereigns; the ancient church of the Brethren had already appointed some of its members, under the appellation of *Seniores Civiles*, (Civil Seniors, or Elders.) For that purpose they were ordained with imposition of hands. This office is still continued in the present Unity of the Brethren. See *Cranz's History of the Brethren*, p. 54, &c. and p. 307.

§ 15.

EVERY settlement of the Congregation of the United Brethren has its own particular regulations, and is directed by its own elders; no Congregation, however, is dependent on another: but still all the Congregations, considered as parts of a whole, constituting the Unity of the Brethren, are connected in the closest manner. This union is an essential character of the constitution of the United Brethren, without which neither the whole, nor the parts, could subsist. In order to maintain and promote this connection, *Synods* are held, from time to time.

AT the *Synods*, the following descriptions of persons, or as many of them as circumstances will permit, are assembled:

a, THOSE Brethren, to whom by the preceding Synod, the inspection and care of the Unity of the Brethren in general, had been committed. These, by virtue of such

commission, convoke and open the Synod, upon which they lay down their office, leaving it in the hands of the Synod: For then, the direction of the Unity of the Brethren is vested in the Synod itself, by which also the *President* of the Synod is chosen and appointed.

b, **THE** Bishops, Civil Seniors, and other servants of the Unity of the Brethren in general.

c, **IN** *Germany*, the lords or ladies of the manors, or proprietors of the land, on which regular settlements are erected, provided they be members of the Unity of the Brethren.

d, **THE** provincial helpers, who have the oversight of Congregations situated in one province.

e, **SUCH** servants of the church and the Congregations of the Brethren, as are called to the Synod by the former Elder's Conference of the Unity, or commissioned to attend it, by the direction of particular Congregations.

f, **DEPUTIES**, chosen by the Congregations of the Brethren. These appear at the Synod in the name of their respective Congregations.

ALL these members of the Synod have not only full liberty of signifying, by word of mouth, or in writing, their sentiments on any particular subject, or deliberation, that occurs, but also of voting for the filling up of offices, and in other cases. This is so managed, that it remains unknown, by whom each vote is given.

SEVERAL female elders also are usually present at the Synods, chiefly with this view, that in the deliberations which refer to the female part of the Congregations, the needful intelligence may be obtained from them. But they have no votes.

AT every Synod, all the subjects which relate to the Unity of the Brethren in general, as well as those concerning individual Congregations and Missions, are taken into mature consideration. If errors in doctrine, or

abuses in practice, have crept in, steps are not only taken to remove them, but also to prevent, by proper measures, their recurrence in future.

§ 16.

THE Holy Scriptures, which, as observed in § 7, are received by the United Brethren as the only rule of faith and practice, form also the chief ground upon which all decisions at the Synods of the Brethren are founded. In deliberations that relate to church-government, and to the concerns of the Congregations of the Brethren and their members, the establishment of new Missions, and the like; the Brethren do not venture to act according to their own discernment only; but have agreed to spread before the Lord all matters of importance, the consequences of which they deem themselves incapable of foreseeing, imploring Him to make known unto them His will, by the use of the *Lot*. Before this is used, all circumstances belonging to the subject under consideration, are carefully weighed. Moreover, it is a fundamental principle with the United Brethren, That the *Lot* is never to be used, in order to constrain any one, against his own conviction to any thing, for instance, to undertake an office, a journey, or voyage, &c. Hence it appears clearly that the use of the *Lot* in the Unity of the Brethren—which is not confined to Synods only, but takes place also in the consultations of the Elders' Conference of the Unity, the Elders' Conferences of Congregations and Missions—is grounded, partly, upon the acknowledgment of human insufficiency, even with the best intention, and partly, on a filial confidence in the gracious condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the leading of his people, combined with that fervent desire, That *His will* only may be done! See *Loretz's Ratio Disciplinæ Unitatis Fratrum*, Sect. xi. (p. 303 to 309.)

§ 17.

THE leading subjects of consultation, together with the resolutions of a Synod, being once more distinctly read to the whole assembly, before its conclusion, they are, when unanimously approved, communicated to the Congregations of the Brethren.

From one Synod to the other, the direction of the inward and outward affairs of *the church of the Brethren* is committed to a Board, consisting of Bishops and Elders chosen by the Synod, and individually confirmed by Lot, which bears the name of, *The Elders Conference of the Unity of the Brethren*. The duty incumbent upon this Board is, to watch, that the doctrine, propounded in all the Congregations of the Brethren, be conformable to the Holy Scriptures and the tenor of the Augsburg Confession, and that the conversation of their members be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that the connection of all the Congregations of the Brethren with each other be preserved, and that the appointment of offices, the management of the concerns of the Missions, the administration of the institutions for education, and every thing which belongs to the internal and external welfare of the church of the Brethren, be faithfully conducted.

§ 18.

BESIDES the schools for boys and girls, established in all the Congregations of the Brethren, and the instruction in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, which all the children and growing youth of both sexes receive from the minister of the place; there are also particular institutions, for educating children of both sexes, established in many settlements of the Brethren. Youths intended for study, are instructed in ancient and modern languages, and other branches of school learning, at the academy of the Unity, from which, at a proper age, they are transferred into the Unity's seminary, or college, both which, for the present, are established at Niesky. In

the latter, they are farther instructed in the sciences, and prepared for the service of the church.

IN most Congregations, and likewise in some few places out of them, (as, at Great Hennersdorf, in Upper Lusatia, and at Montmirail, in the principality of Neufchatel,) boarding schools are established for the children of such parents as are not themselves members of Congregations of the Brethren, but who have a decided preference for the method of educating and instructing youth adopted in them, and, from this motive, choose to intrust the Brethren with training up their children.

SUCH institutions are settled at present,

a, for *boys*, at Great Hennersdorf, near Herrnhut; Klein Welke, Gnadenfeld, Ebersdorf, New Wied, Christiansfeld, Koenigsfeld; Sarepta in Russia, at Fulnec, Mirfield, and Fairfield, in England; at Gracehill in Ireland; Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Salem, in North America.

b, for *girls*, at Herrnhut, Klein Welke, Gnadenberg, Gnadenfrey, Gnadenfeld, Ebersdorf, New Wied, Christiansfeld, and Koenigsfeld, in Montmirail; at Fulnec, Gommersal, Wyke, Fairfield, Dukinfield, Ockbrook, Bedford, and Tytherton, in England; at Gracehill in Ireland; at Bethlehem, Lititz, and Salem, in North America.

§ 19.

THE adult unmarried men, and boys, upwards of 12 years of age, in the settlements of the United Brethren, live mostly together, in a house, called, *The Choirhouse of the single Brethren*. Thus also the adult unmarried women, and girls, upwards of 12 years of age, inhabit *The Choirhouse of the single Sisters*. In some of the larger Congregations of the Brethren are also *Choirhouses for Widowers, and for Widows*. Each of these houses is under the inspection of one or more elders of their sex, and every company living together in one

apartment, has its own overseer. Each choir, besides attending the public and private meetings of the whole Congregation, has its own particular meetings: they also begin and end the day with morning and evening devotion. The inhabitants of a choirhouse usually dine in fellowship, and sleep in an airy dormitory furnished with single beds: but, as to the mode of living, the rank, and age of the individuals, are properly taken into consideration, and the infirm and sick have all possible convenience provided for them. Those of the single Brethren and single Sisters, who either follow their trades, or serve in families, enjoy indeed equally the spiritual and temporal care of the elders of their respective choirs, yet do not always live and sleep in their choirhouses: but this depends on the domestic circumstances of each family, and the nature of the trades.

ALL the choirhouses, both as to their inward and outward regulations, are subordinate to the Elders, who are intrusted with the direction of the whole Congregation.

§ 20.

Marriages, in the Congregations of the United Brethren, are, by general agreement, never contracted without the advice and approbation of the elders of the Congregation.

WHENEVER, therefore, a brother wishes to marry, he, in the first instance, signifies his intention to the elders, who take his wish, as well as his proposal, if he has one, into consideration. If they find no objection, his proposal is, first, submitted to the Lot. If the question is affirmatively decided, and the Sister proposed, gives her free consent, and likewise the parents of both parties have declared their approbation, or such approbation may be presumed, and no other hindrance appears, bans are then published, according to the custom of the country, and the wedding is publicly performed, in the manner usual in

their place of abode. The newly-married persons enjoy, afterwards, the faithful care and counsel of the elders of the choir of married people, which have principally for their aim, to direct them in the way of beginning and continuing their marriage-state before the eyes of God.

§ 21.

EVERY Congregation of the United Brethren is directed by a Board of Elders, called, *The Elders-Conference of the Congregation*, whose province it is, to have a watchful eye over that Congregation, with respect to the doctrine, the walk and deportment of all its members, the concerns of the choirs, and of each individual person; and to promote the welfare of every part, as well as to prevent harm and danger.

THE better to obtain this aim, a committee of overseers is appointed, who have the commission, carefully to watch over the domestic affairs and the means of outward subsistence in the Congregation; to adjust, in a manner becoming Brethren, the differences which may occur between the members of the Congregation, and to take care, that all things be done decently, and in order, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

§ 22.

THE *ministerial* office is, in every Congregation of the United Brethren, committed to an ordained brother, who is solidly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and well versed in them. He is called the minister. And although such Brethren also, who are not students by profession, are sometimes made use of for delivering discourses; yet none are employed, but those whose delivery shews them to be well grounded in the Word of God.

ALTHOUGH, in the Congregations of the Brethren, no one is permitted to preach, who is not sufficiently ap-

proved, regularly called, and presented to, and accepted by, the Congregation, and, thus, properly introduced into his office; yet all the members of the Congregation may, and should, according to the command of our Saviour and His apostles, exhort, admonish, encourage, and excite each other, faithfully to follow Jesus Christ.

§ 23.

THE *Meetings* of the Congregations of the United Brethren for divine worship, have for their aim the daily and indispensable nourishment of the inward man, by the knowledge of the gospel, and a close application of its salutary doctrines to the heart. Their social religious worship consists, partly, of public doctrinal discourses and sermons, (to which every one is admitted,) and, partly, of private meetings of the communicants, or of the different choirs* mentioned in § 19. For the latter certain memorial days in the year are appointed, upon which each choir gratefully remembers the benefits of the Lord, experienced in the course of the foregoing year, exciting each other to renewed faithfulness and diligence in attending to the particular duties enjoined upon them in the Word of God.

AT the doctrinal meetings for the members of the Congregation, (called, *Congregation-Meetings*, which are usually held every Sunday evening,)—or for any choir of the Congregation, the discourse is, generally, a meditation on one of the two texts of Scripture, which are appointed for special consideration on that day in the Congregations of the United Brethren, and printed together in a *Collection of Daily Words and Doctrinal Texts for the whole year*.

* The distinction of choirs, in the Congregations of the Brethren, refers to the difference of age, sex, and station in life: As to age, boys and girls above, or under twelve years of age, are considered as belonging to separate choirs; and the difference in the station of life, constitutes the distinction between the single, married, and widowed choirs.

EVER since 1731, there have been annually appointed, and published for the use of the Congregations of the Brethren, certain Texts of the Old and New Testaments, containing promises, examples, admonitions, warnings, and consolations, each of which is illustrated, or applied, by a verse subjoined. This manual is always prepared, in due time, to be printed for the next following year, in order, if possible, to be used, at the commencement of every year, in all the Congregations, colonies, and missionary-settlements of the Brethren. Experience has proved, that these Daily Texts are means, which God has blessed for the edification of the Congregations, who are thus fed with the same spiritual food from the Divine Word, and are thereby preserved in peculiar fellowship of spirit with each other.

§ 24.

FOR the public reading of this salutary Word, especially the books of the New Testament, one meeting in the week, at least, is set apart; when however, it is not usual for the teacher to add much, by way of explaining words, or illustrating the sense. But it is customary; at the annual reading of the narrative of the sufferings, the death, and resurrection of Jesus, in the Passion week and at Easter, at particular meetings, to intersperse suitable verses, sung by the Congregation, and anthems musically performed, which contributes not a little to render these meetings most edifying, and is conducive to leave strong and salutary impressions on the mind.

AT other public meetings, the latest accounts of the (progress of the) endeavors of the Brethren, to spread the kingdom of God among Christians and Heathen, are communicated. This is also particularly done on *Congregation-Days*, as they are called, which are held every four weeks on Sundays, and are intended for special consideration of the calling and destination of the church of the Brethren: On these occasions also, new members

are, after due probation, received into the Congregation, with the holy kiss of peace, given by an Elder of their sex, during the singing of an appropriate hymn.

§ 25.

BUT, as divine worship, among the primitive Christians, did not consist merely in doctrinal discourses and exhortations, but rather, in *Songs of Praise* to the glory of God our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in prayer and supplication; the same is also done in the Congregations of the United Brethren.

WITH respect to *Prayers and Supplications*, it is particularly to be noticed here, that, ever since 1727, a certain company exists in the Unity of the Brethren, the members of which are agreed to make intercessions for the advancement of the work of the Lord on earth, for all the concerns of the Congregations of the Brethren, and their servants, for the magistrates, &c. *This Company of Intercessors*, the numbers and persons of which are changed from time to time, meets once a fortnight for fellowship in prayer, or to excite each other to faithfulness in the exercise of it: on which occasions the special subjects for their particular prayers unto the Lord, according to the exigencies of the times, are laid before them. (See *Cranz's History of the Brethren*, p. 124, &c.)

THE *Litany* of the United Brethren is, regularly, prayed every Sunday in the forenoon, before the sermon.

§ 26.

SINGING is considered, by the Brethren, as an essential part of their divine worship, and constitutes so principal a feature of it, that many of their services consist only of singing. The Congregations (in Germany, &c.) have in present use the *Hymn-book edited at Barby*, in the year 1778, and re-printed from time to time, containing a collection of the ancient and modern Hymns of the

Brethren, and a selection from the earlier Hymns of the Lutheran church.

(OF the present Hymn-book, in use among the United Brethren in the British dominions, a *new and revised edition* was printed at *Manchester*, in 1809.)

A collection of *Liturgic Hymns* of the United Brethren, containing hymns of praise to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, and hymns for the festival days in the Christian church, liturgies used at baptisms, burials, &c. is in constant and blessed use among the Brethren.

CERTAIN hymns, many years ago, introduced in some of the Congregations of the Brethren, (which, indeed did not contain the sentiments falsely attributed to them, either in mockery, or from misunderstanding, but were, however, not altogether becoming the simplicity and seriousness of divine truth,) have long since been cancelled by the Synods and entirely disused. The ministers of the church of the Brethren have taken pains to express themselves, also in their hymns, from time to time, more intelligibly, simply, and plainly, and in such a manner, that no serious and devout person needs to hesitate, or even to sit silent, if the question were put to him, "Understandest thou what thou singest?"

§ 27.

IN like manner, the Brethren have been intent on using simplicity and plainness in all their church-transactions and ceremonies, setting aside all outward pomp and show, and needless decorations of their churches and chapels.

THE bishops and ministers of the Congregations do not distinguish themselves by their dress, except that they use a white surplice at ordinations, and at the administration of the sacraments.

§ 28.

AT the *Baptism of Children*, both the witnesses and the minister bless the infant with laying on of hands, immediately after the transaction. No exorcism is used; but the baptized are fervently commended in prayer, by the minister, to the gracious preservation of God from all evil, and from the power of sin and satan.

§ 29.

AT the *Holy Communion*, the blessed bread having been consecrated, is distributed among the communicants, standing, by several deacons assisting the minister, who consecrates and administers the elements: the recipients hold the bread in their hands until the distribution is completed, after which it is eaten by all, at once, kneeling. Afterwards also the consecrated cup is given from one to the other, likewise standing, till all have partaken of it.

THE Supper of the Lord is celebrated, in regular settlements of the Brethren, every four weeks, on Saturday evening; and in other places on every fourth Sunday, of which all the communicants partake, who feel liberty to do it, according to their own conviction of the state of their hearts. Previous to it, and likewise on festival and memorial days of the Congregations of the Brethren, and their choirs, a *Lovefeast* is frequently held: that is, the members of the Congregation eat and drink in fellowship, agreeably to the custom of the primitive Christians. Small plain cakes and tea are distributed, during the singing of some verses by the Congregation, with intermixed anthems, accompanied by the organ, and sometimes by other instruments.

SOME days before the Holy Communion, the proper scriptural mode of preparation for this high enjoyment, according to the exhortation of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a man examine himself.* &c. is, by the minister, earnestly recommended to all the communicants. And

besides this, the Brethren and Sisters are individually spoken with, previous to the Holy Communion, by the respective elders of the choirs, with a view to learn their present state of heart and mind. And as they stand in the closest connection with each other, the Elders are also enabled to impart counsel in the best and surest manner; and, at times, according to circumstances, to advise them for conscience sake, to abstain from partaking the next time, or even for a longer period, after previous communication with the Elders of the Congregation. But, in such cases, strict care is taken, lest any improper censure be passed upon such of the communicants as absent themselves once or twice from the Holy Communion, either from their own conviction, or by the advice of their Elders.

SINCE the Brethren and Sisters live in constant and cordial intercourse with their Elders, and confidently unbosom to them all their concerns, and the real state of their souls; no farther confession, as practised in some other churches, is introduced in the Congregations of the Brethren. Absolution is implored of the Lord in fellowship, immediately before the participation of the Holy Communion, and sealed with the holy kiss of peace.

§ 30.

THE Pedilavium, or washing of feet, was indeed used ever since the commencement of the renewed church of the Brethren, at Herrnhut, but only by some individuals, who considered it, as a duty incumbent upon them, literally to fulfil the commandment of Christ. John 13, 14. "*Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*" Yet it was not done previous to the Lord's Supper, and still less in the whole assembly of the Congregation. It was not till after the spread of the Brethren in foreign countries and in colonies, that some Congregations used it before every celebration of the Holy Communion. At present, it is done only at certain seasons, as, on Maundy-Thurseday, by the whole Congregation, and on some

other occasions in the choirs. (See *Cranz's History of the Brethren*, p. 125. Note.) It is performed by each sex separately, and accompanied by suitable verses, treating of our being cleansed and washed from sin by the blood of Jesus.

§ 31.

Dying persons are blessed for their departure by their Elders, during prayer and singing a verse, with imposition of hands. This is not done at the very time of departing; because this is uncertain, and many of the dying do not then possess the presence of mind to attend to it.

ANOTHER peculiar custom, found in the Congregations of the Brethren, is their assembling, on *Easter Sunday morning* at sun-rise, in their burying-grounds,* when the minister pronounces a confession of faith, contained in what is called, *The Easter-morning Litany*; at which also those who have died in the Lord as members of that Congregation, since the last celebration of Easter, are remembered by name, as having departed in hope of a glorious resurrection.

It may be observed in general, with respect to the regulations and ceremonies in the Congregations of the United Brethren, that they do not necessarily always remain the same, liberty having been reserved for alterations and amendments, which the ancient Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia made use of in regulating their church-order, pursuant to the ancient canon, *Differentia ceremoniarum non tollit unitatem ecclesiæ*. (A difference in ceremonies does not abolish the Unity of the church.) (See *Cranz, &c.* in the *Note*, cited in § 30.)

§ 32.

THE church of the United Brethren in all their Congregations, have agreed upon certain *rules and orders*, which have for their aim, that all evil may be prevented before hand, and, whatever might prove an occasion to

* In some Congregations, owing to local circumstances, they assemble in the church, or chapel.

the commission of sin, removed, as far as possible. These *Congregation-Orders*, or *Statutes*, are laid before every one, that desires to become a member of the church of the Brethren, for his due consideration. Whoever adopts them voluntarily, and with a conviction of their propriety, binds himself, either by giving his hand to the Brethren of the Committee of Overseers, (see § 21.) or by subscribing these Statutes with his own hand: yet he still retains full liberty, if he should alter his mind, to leave the church of the Brethren again; after which these Congregation-orders are, of course, no longer binding upon him.

WHOEVER, after having voluntarily agreed to them, does not walk conformably to them, but loses sight of the end of his living in a Congregation of the Brethren, falls under *Congregation-discipline*, that *censure* which, in ancient times, was already introduced in the Congregations of the Brethren. An offensive conduct, seduction to works of the flesh, and to licentiousness; in a word, whatever occasions hurt to the soul: these things are the transgressions which draw this *Congregation-discipline* after them. Thus it appears that it is not merely the transgression of the Congregation-orders, but also, and principally, the insincere mind, which is here the subject of censure.

§ 33.

AGREEABLY to the direction of our Saviour in Matt. xviii. 15, &c. *If thy brother shall trespass against thee*, &c. the Congregation-discipline has various degrees, and consists in admonitions, warnings, and reproofs, given to those who transgress; first by his fellow brother; next, by one of the Elders of the Congregation; and, lastly, by the Committee of Overseers; in exclusion from the Holy Communion, and, according to the nature of the case, also from other private meetings of the Congregation: and this continues, until genuine repentance, and a real conversion, become evident in the person

falling under discipline; when he is either re-admitted to the Holy Communion, or reconciled to the Congregation, after a deprecatory letter, in which he expresses sorrow for his transgression, and asks forgiveness, has been read. In case of great and public offence given, such persons are also absolved with laying on of hands, in the presence of the Congregation.

§ 34.

It is, however, here to be observed, that no privation of temporal honor, dignity, or substance, is connected with this church or Congregation-discipline; neither can this ever be the case, as it never interferes with any merely civil regulations, which fall under the cognizance of the laws of the land.

WHOEVER, instead of submitting to the Congregation-discipline, becomes angry, and hardened in his mind, so that this brotherly treatment produces no beneficial effect in him; he either withdraws from the church of the United Brethren; or is prohibited, by the Committee of Overseers, in the name of the Congregation, from residing any longer in the settlement. This separation, however, is not attended with any anathemas,—such as are usual in public excommunication,—on the contrary, the individual thus transgressing, is dismissed with sorrowful and cordial admonition, and commended to the mercy and favor of God, with earnest prayer, for the renewal of a right spirit within him.

A person dismissed from a settlement of the United Brethren, can, of course, not be received and admitted, for the time being, into any other settlement, as a member of the Congregation, nor can he produce the requisite written testimony of recommendation from the Elders of his former place of abode, which, in other cases, is given to the members of a Congregation of the Brethren, when removing to, or visiting in, other Congregation-settlements.

